6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

"Immediately the day dawns the heads of the families give to almost all the junior members and servants of the household and to wives and children, money-presents varying from 4 as. to a rupee or two. Children preserve these presents to serve as their pocket money. In the more numerically large families similar presents are also made by the heads of particular branches of the same family to their juniors, children, wives and servants. These presents are intended to be the forerunners of incomes to them more splendid all the year round.

"But one other item connected with the festival deserves mention. On the evening of the previous day, about four or five o'clock most well-to-do families distribute paddy or rice, as the case may be, in varying quantities with some other accessories to the family-workmen, whether they live on the family-estates or not. In return for this, these labourers bring with them for presentation the fruits of their own labours such as vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, jaggery, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals, &c., in ways such as their respective circumstances might permit.

"With the close of the noon-meal the festival practically concludes, and nothing remains of it for the next day or for the same evening, for that matter. In some families after the noon-meals are over, dancing and games of various kinds are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are also resorted to."

"THE THIRUVATHIRA FESTIVAL.

"Thiruvathira is one of the three great national occasions of Malabar. It generally comes off in the Malayalam month of Dhanu (December or January) on the day called the Thiruvathira day. It is essentially a festival in which females are almost exclusively concerned and lasts for but a single day. The popular conception of it is that it is in commemoration of the death of Kamadevan, the Cupid of our national mythology. As recorded in the old Puranas, Kamadevan was destroyed in the burning fire of the third eye of Siva, one of the chief members of our Divine Trinity. Hence he is now supposed as having only an ideal or rather spiritual existence, and thus he exerts a powerful influence upon the lower passions of human nature. The memory of this unhappy tragedy is still kept alive amongst us, particularly the female section, by means of the annual celebration of this important festival. About a week before the day, the festival practically opens. At about 4 in the morning every young female member of Nair families with pretensions to decency, gets out of her bed and takes her bath in a tank. Usually, a fairly large number of these young ladies collect themselves in

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

796 the tank for the purpose. Then all or almost all of these plunge
533 in the water and begin to take part in the singing that is pre-
[515] sently to follow. One of these then leads off by means of a peculiar rhythmic song chiefly pertaining to Cupid. This singing is simultaneously accompanied by a curious sound produced with her hand on the water. The palm of the left hand is closed and kept immediately underneath the surface of the water. Then the palm of the other is forcibly brought down in a slanting direction and struck against its surface. So that the water is completely ruffled and is splashed in all directions producing a loud deep noise. This process is continuously prolonged together with the singing. One stanza is now over along with the sound and then the leader stops a while for the others to follow her in her wake. This being likewise over, she caps her first stanza, with another at the same time beating on the water and so on until the conclusion of the song. Then all of them make a long pause and then begin another. The process goes on until the peep of dawn when they rub themselves dry and come home to dress themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire. They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or ghee; and sometimes with a superficial coating of antimony powder. They also wear white, black, or red marks lower down the middle of their foreheads close to the part where the two eyebrows near one another. They also chew betel and thus redden their mouths
[526] and lips. Then they proceed to the enjoyment of another prominent item of pleasure, viz., swinging to and fro, on what is usually known as an Uzhinjal.*

796 "On the festival day after the morning bath is over, they
264 take a light meal and in the noon the family-dinner is voraciously
262 attacked; the essential and almost universal ingredients of which being ordinary ripe plantain fruits and a delicious preparation
[535] of arrow-root powder purified and mixed with jaggery or sugar and also cocoanut. Then till evening dancing and merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in.

796 "The husband population are inexcusably required to be
[586] present in the wives' houses before evening as they are bound to do on the Onam and Vishu occasions; failure to do which is looked upon as a step or rather the first step on the part of the defaulting husband towards a final separation or divorce from the
[132] wife. Despite the rigour of the bleak December season during
[515] which commonly the festival falls, heightened inevitably by the constant blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure from their early baths and their frolics in water. The biting cold of

* A swing made of bamboo.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

Another peculiar feature of this festival is that all the male and female members of the family sit apart at meals. By mid-day the principal meal is over, and each goes dressed in fine attire now, seeks the amusement most congenial to him. Field-games, such as hand-ball or rounders, personal combats, games of chess, dice, and cards, dancing by females, and music parties constitute the leading forms of enjoyment from morning until evening.

Hand-ball matches.—A small stick is planted at a fixed spot, and the young men divide themselves into two rival parties. A member of one party stands at the post, while the others stand away from it. The ball which is usually made of coir rope is thrown by a member of one of the opposing party, and on its being struck by the man at the post, the others attempt to catch it before the bounce or stop its onward career. If the ball hits the post, or if any member of the opposing party catches the ball before it has touched the ground, that player's turn is over. Another man takes his place and so on, until all the members of one party have had their turn. Then the rival section begins to play exactly in the same manner and under the same rules as before.

Combats are of two kinds, namely, those between single adversaries, and those held in batches. In the first, the people of one locality divide themselves into two parties. When the match is opened, the leader of one group brings forward a trained pugilist who goes into the intervening open space, between the two groups, challenging any one from the opposite camp to meet him in fair fight. A little while after, some one from the other party takes up the challenge, and then the combat begins. The victor is rewarded with presents of cloths and money by the rich and generous members of the community assembled there. The same process is continued till the close of the day. In Palghat the *Onam* games are of a rougher character; the tenants of certain landlords turn out each under their own leader and engage in sham fights in which there is much rough play.

There is also another amusement, in which a peculiar bow, formed of a strong and slightly elastic wood with a split bamboo finely polished for the string, is used. By means of a

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

and dancing. This nightly routine of *pujas*, offerings, dancing, etc., is thus continued for the prescribed number of days.

On the morning following the last day, the votaries purify themselves by a bath and fetch branches of *pala* trees, and a dancing procession is organised, which wends its way through the Nayar streets, accompanied by the Goddess manifested through her *Velichapad*, to the temple of the Goddess, and from there disperse to their respective houses before evening after singing songs of praise and thanks-giving in honour of the Goddess. A pit, 15 feet long, 5 feet broad and 3 feet deep, is then made and filled with ten to fifteen cart-loads of fuel which is burned and reduced to glowing red hot charcoal. Here also is performed a *puja*. At about 4 A. M., the *Velichapad* through whom the Goddess manifests herself, the priests, the votaries, and lastly the caste-men, all walk over the fire several times.

The day dawns and the senior member of the Porayattu family sitting on the stool consecrated to Bhagavati, and covering his head with the silk cloth of the deity, propitiates her with offerings of fruits, cocoanuts, and fowls. The whole ceremony is thus brought to an end. The object of this propitiation is to protect people from the attacks of cholera, small-pox, and other epidemics.

Agricultural ceremonies.

Before closing this part of the subject, it may be noted that the agricultural year begins with the *Vishu* (first of Medam, about the middle of April) at which the hot weather is supposed to terminate. In families where the members pursue agriculture as a profession, they send for the local *Kaniyan* (astrologer), who estimates by astronomical calculations the agricultural prospects and the probable quantity of rain during the ensuing year. He is also asked to choose an auspicious day for ploughing, and on that day the master of the house goes to the seed-store with his Pulayan slaves and takes out a small quantity of each variety of seed, which he puts in a cup made of the leaves of the *kanniram* (nux vomica); he then places the cups in a basket near a lamp in the yard and places a small heap of rice around or near it. A new ploughshare fastened to a plough, and a pair of oxen are also brought, and these are painted with rice water. They are then taken in procession to the field, on reaching which the

8:Panikkar I-4,5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

ceremony is to be performed and each of them puts on a mask made for the occasion and paints himself in such a way as to look really terrible. The mask of each has a different expression. At about 8 o'clock in the night, the girl (or girls) possessed of the devil is brought in front of the house where are gathered all the people of the village. The whole place is illuminated with big lamps and the girl sits alone, sometimes supported by her mother. Then one by one the masked magicians come before her and execute most frightening dances to the accompaniment of terrifying music. In dancing they make various gestures, possibly with a view to mesmeric effect, and throw various sorts of power, and *rudhilam*, prepared to look very much like blood, is brought into great prominence. Dancer succeeds dancer, each more terrible looking than his predecessor, and the poor girl loses control of herself and falls into a sort of hysteria, in which the devil in her confesses where it came from and who prompted it,[1] etc. In that case the dance is supposed to have been successful and the devil is supposed to have been cast out.

This *Kolam Thullal* is performed on various occasions. The only time I have witnessed it was in 1913, when passing through a village situated in the very heart of the country. The "subject," on that occasion, was a child-mother of fourteen, and the reason for the performance given by her brother, when asked by me, was that the girl had fainted four or five times during the month "without any cause," that they had found out through the astrologer that her husband's relations had been trying to cause trouble by evil magic.

A milder and less expensive form of the same dance is *Velan Thullal*. In this only one man dances with almost the same paraphernalia as the *Kāniyāns* have for *Kolam Thullal*. This variety, however, is generally used only to cure children.

Such performances are only for the ghosts of dead men who have entered into girls or children. But if *Kutti Chattan* tries to do harm, these practices are of no avail. *Kutti Chattan* (sometimes merely *Chattan*, *Kutti* means boy, a term of endearment, *Chattan* is supposed to be a corrupted form of Satan) is in no sense a god. He is something like Puck, very much inclined to mischief. He is supposed to be a dwarf, though he can assume any other form or remain invisible as he chooses. He never goes out of his way to harm anyone, though if anybody injures him once, *Kutti Chattan* never forgives and keeps on troubling him for life. His favourite method of annoying anybody is by throwing stones at the house or dropping unclean things in the food. He may do so without interruption, which would render life almost impossible. He is supposed to have no fingers and, therefore, his vices can be thwarted by people who know it. For example, he cannot pick up things if kept in a place

[1] Note, the "confessions" are without doubt due to subconscious suggestion. The whole scheme of the dance—the music, the masks, the lighting—seems to be arranged with the sole purpose of rendering the "subject" liable to suggestion. More than this, the girl herself believes that she must be possessed of some ghost, and therefore the ground for suggestion is already prepared.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Kanisans
Manans

564 614 siums" too – for what reason, I could not find out; I could see no relation between astrology and a gymnasium. Like the *Kolla-kurups*, they also had *kiriyams* which were exogamous as the *kalarikels* were; the [428] informant's matrilineal clan was called Manga. Inheritance was *makkathayam*.

* 595 601 The family living in the house here, was divided into two sections. The first, of which Ramankuti was the eldest, consisted of himself and his brother, Ticheri, three years younger than him. Their father, who was now dead, had successively had two wives, Lakshmi and Kalyany, both of them still alive and living in the house; the first section was descendant from the first wife, while the other was issued from the second. Kalyany had had six children, of which, Paru, aged thirty, was the eldest; there were four brothers, Pachu, Shanghuni, Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan, and a younger daughter called Nani, aged twelve. The interesting part of the organization was that the two sections had both contracted polyandrous marriages: Ramankuti and Ticheri with one wife, Madhevi aged twenty eight: their four half brothers with Devaki, twenty three years old. Both women were from other *kalarikels*, the first from Kangal and the other from Kavalapara. They all lived in the same house, however, with Nani, only Paru having married Krishnan of Kutiparli *kalarikel* and having gone off to live with him. Paru had three children with Krishnan, as did Madhevi with the informant and his brother. The four brothers had only one little daughter, aged one year, with Devaki. The genealogy, as it was dictated to me, is given in Table 16.

* 595 [591] Ramankuti told me that he and Pachu were the fully-fledged astrologers of the family. Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan were studying the art. Ticheri did odd jobs as a labourer, and Shanghuni was employed as a [427] workman in the local match factory. The house that they all lived in was rented on a *kudiviruppu* lease for which they paid eight annas a year to the *janmi* of the land upon which it stood, a Nambudri Brahmin called Totapai Mana Nilakanda Nambudripad.

564 [296] [305] [535] On the 22nd of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi to visit the house of a *Manan*. These people are washermen and barbers, and they play an important role in Kerala as it is they and they alone who can wash the polluted clothes of menstruating Nambudri Brahmin and Nayar women. But they are also dancers in the temple on festive occasions.

361 351 We found the house for which we were looking, in the actual village of Lakkidi, in the vicinity of the railway station, near the river. It was a moderately large, well-to-do building, standing isolated in a large compound, in which clothes had been laid out to dry on the ground.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 210]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala
West Tibetans AJ4

dbang Nor-pu), who had already brought us to Kyelang from Kulu. Towards the middle of July, with some added personnel recruited from him and placed under the authority of his daughter, Dölma (*sGrol-ma*), we left for Rupchu and Ladak. (For an account of this journey, see *Chevauchée tibétaine*, by the same author, Fernand Nathan editeur, Paris, 1958.)

My first stage was the Shar Shu monastery, near Kolong, where the Wazir of Lahul and his family resided. Here we attended the annual masked dance of the lamas, and spent the night at Thakur Partap Chand's fort-like castle. It was here, too, that I met the *goba* of the nomads of Rupchu; he was introduced to me by Mangal Chand, alias *amchi* Tashi Dawa, and I received an invitation to go to Korzok.

The next day, we continued to Patseo or Dozam (*rDo-Zam*) as it is called in Tibetan, and camped with Tsewang Norbu, chief of the Gyakar Kham-pa, and his people for a few days until we received the pack ponies and men which I had ordered from him.

This gave us the opportunity to attend the local fair and annual market here and to see for ourselves in what manner goods from the nomads further north were bought or exchanged for other products by the sedentary Lahulis. We also attended a local show given by travelling entertainers from Spiti, in which they performed the ancient ceremony of breaking a large stone on the chest of a man.

The climb up over the Baralatcha pass (16,147 ft.) was strenuous, but we were soon over it, and travelling on the flat Lingti plain, along the banks of the Yunan river. We reached the Ser chu and then the Tsarab chu, which we forded to reach Spiti. A short distance further on, we crossed the south-eastern boundary of Kashmir, and continued our progress now through that State.

A few days later, we turned in a south-easterly direction so as to reach the shores of the lake called Tso (*mTs'ho*) Morari (this is the name on the map, but I heard locally that it should be more correctly *Moriri*), where the *goba* resided.

We arrived at our destination towards the beginning of August, not without difficulty because we had had to cross some very high passes, one of them the Lagnyal-la (20,600 ft.). Our caravan, both men and horses, suffered from the unusual altitude and, for some days, were quite unable to go on. But finally, we descended to relatively more reasonable heights and were received, some distance away from where we were going to stay, by the *goba* and his nephew. They were both relatives of the Karpa house in Lahul.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala
West Tibetans AJ4

We were taken to a camp two miles further on where we found some black, yak-hair, Tibetan tents, standing, as they do, like spiders because of their strange construction. There were flocks of sheep about, as well as a few yaks (*gYag*), animals from which our present hosts, the nomads, made their living. A tent, larger than the others, proved to be that of the *goba*, and we were taken close to it and invited to put up our own tents nearby. 114

Very soon after our arrival, we attended a masked dance at the monastery, and the abbot himself acted the Black Hat dancer which is the principal role. There were many spectators present, all the nomads of Rupchu taking a particular and obvious pleasure in what they saw. [792] [796] [535]

Another day, we witnessed a ceremony called *zor* (*Zor*) in which a *torma*, made of the head, backbone and entrails of a goat, standing on the animal's skin, was destroyed by lamas armed with great knives, as a way of exorcising devils and evil spirits. [796] [789]

Then came a reception in the *goba's* tent, a festive function at which there were many guests. We were entertained with *chang*, dried meat, *tsampa*, turnips and buttered tea, and the party was a very gay one in which most of the guests, the *goba* and the abbot included, got roaring drunk. [574]

At another reception to which we were invited at the monastery before leaving and in which all our caravaneers received coloured bits of rag as talismans from the hands of the *tulku*, I was able to inform myself about the marital customs of the nomads.

The day after the reception at the *gompa*, we left for Leh, capital of Ladak (7th August, 1938). It was a cold journey as there was frost already on the high passes, and we had three to cross before we reached lower ground near Tso Kar (*mTs'ho dKar*), "the White Lake". From here, we continued down the Gya valley, where we encountered the first houses and fields again and received our first letter in many weeks, addressed to us by the Superintendent of the Moravian Mission in Ley, the Reverend Walter Asboe. A few stages further on, we crossed the Indus near Upshi, and followed its right bank past Himis and Tikse *gompas* to Sheh, one stage before our destination.

On the 22nd August, 1938, we came to Leh in the early afternoon and were received at the entrance of the town by the Moravian Missionary, the local authorities and a crowd of Ladakis, men, women and children. We were taken past the mile long *mani* walls to the Residency in the south-westerly quarter, where we had been authorized to stay during the period of our visit to Ladak. Very soon, we met those who

796 In some families, after
526 the meal is over, dancing and games of various kinds
535 are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of
[524] the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are also resorted to."

264 On the subject of religion, Mr. Fawcett writes as
515 follows. "No Nāyar, unless one utterly degraded by the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his
782 food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It
783 is a rule seldom broken that every Nāyar goes to the
[512] temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed;
[564] generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Pulayan, or any inferior being, even a Tiyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandal-wood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he
[683] can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in his time, about a century ago, the man of inferior caste thus approaching a Nāyar would be cut down instantly
[656] with a sword; there would be no words. Now that
[671] the people of India are inconvenienced with an Arms Act which inhibits sword play of this kind, and with a
[178] law system under which high and low are rated alike, the Nāyar has to content himself with an imperious grunt-like shout for the way to be cleared for him as he stalks on imperturbed. His arrogance is not diminished, but he cannot now show it in quite the same way.

796 "I will attempt a description of the ceremonial
[773] observed at the Pishāri kāvu—the Pishāri temple near Quilandy on the coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where Bhagavati is supposed in vague legend to have slain an Āsura or gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which